

TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS
Open Space Committee Minutes
Wednesday, Sept. 10, 2025
9:30-11:30 AM

Call to Order

Members Present: Anita Baldwin, Peter Brown, Sarah He, Eric Bredo

City Council Liaison Present: Stanley Mok

Absent: Kit Gordon, Richard Contreras, Viggie Mokkarala.

Also present: Wendie Ward, Denise Gluhan, Emina Mahic, members of the Pinewoods School presentation group, including the principal and staff of CAW architects, including Mary Desing, CAW Architects

Minutes

Acceptance of July 2025 OSC Meeting Minutes. PB moved, AB seconded, all approved.

Presentations

Pinewood School presentation in response to prior OSC feedback on upper campus modernization plans.

- Bird-safe glass is now being planned, at least for large windows
- Pervious surfaces are being adopted where appropriate, such as pervious cement in drive-around, grass, and pavers. Stormwater is being addressed by more infiltration, less runoff in certain areas around the buildings.
- Landscaping is largely the same and will use a variety of native plant species. Four protected trees are to be removed, three pines and one redwood. Some new trees will be added.
- Perimeter fencing proposed: Open fencing along Fremont Rd. Solid fencing along the sides (possibly Trexwood (compressed plastic boards). Black chain link fencing on the South to allow a view from the nearby pathway. Entrance gates to be patterned laser-cut steel.
- Geotechnical and paving noted; tennis courts and playing field in liquefaction zone.
- Lighting—all lighting downward facing (limited lumens/candlepower). Some on slightly higher posts along parking area.
- Construction timeline: Break ground in 2027. Work in Summer 2027, all year 2028, summer 2029.

Committee response was positive, appreciating the careful concern for prior suggestions.

Continuing Business—Hiking Trail Benches

Emina Mahic consulted with the committee regarding recommendations for memorial park/trail benches. She is beginning a pilot program and is seeking advice from several committees on how many benches to approve and how they might be allocated to those wanting to donate them.

The committee was concerned about having too many benches, cluttering the paths and hillsides. Ms. Mahic was thinking of possibly 10 or 15. EB suggested that the Town should decide what it actually *wants* rather than having an ever-increasing number of benches proliferating all over. For example, sites could be proposed by committee members or other Townspeople, and, if judged *desirable* (not merely acceptable), the site could be approved and (possibly) put up for bid, to help pay for repair, etc. SM suggested that benches have an arm or other obstruction in the middle so they don't attract overnighters. In general, discussion was clearly in early stages.

Planning Site Reviews

- **27285 Elena Rd.**

The proposed house is positioned on a relatively level part of the property surrounded on three sides by a steep hillsides (30% or greater) going downwards, the middle part in the back of the house going down toward highway 280. Current plans also show a drainage pipe directing runoff from the house down to a stone catchment area/box designed to slow the water before it goes further down the hill.

The committee was concerned about protecting the steep slope from development or disturbance that might result in mudslides or other problems and preserving as wildlife habitat

Recommendations and considerations:

- Recommend an Open Space Easement over the 30%+ slope behind and around the house, from contour line 434 down to the property line. Is the drain line down to the energy dissipator allowed in OSE?
- Recommend removal of palms, which are invasive.
- Recommend landscaping with native plants. See calscape.org for list of plants native to Los Altos Hills.
- Add Condition of Approval (COA) Shall remove all Stinkwort plants (*Dittrichia graveolens*) from entire property and the road ROW by manual pulling or herbicide by Sept 1 of each year until final building approval.

PB moved, AB seconded, all approved.

- **26540 Purissima Rd.**

This proposed new house is largely on the site of the old one to be removed except 1) a proposed pool and lawn area extending further outwards on the back, and, 2) a new ADU on higher ground to the back left (as viewed from the front of the house). Since the ADU is not up for consideration at this time we did not delve into it.

The Committee's main interest in this property concerned the water drainage swale running through the back yard. Water comes in from the left (as viewed from the front to back of the house) and is gradually brought together to a narrow point at the back right, where it enters a culvert that goes under the road/path. At present the combination of absorption by the earth, and some slow drainage across the property, are enough to avoid channeled erosion. The committee felt that this would probably continue to be the case, barring future climate changes, and does not recommend any change. How the proposed ADU fits into this scenario in the future is another matter, to be considered at that time.

Recommendations and Considerations:

- Recommend landscaping with native plants, e.g., native low-water grasses for the lawn. See calscape.org for list of plants native to Los Altos Hills.
- The drainage channel across the back should remain unobstructed and without rocks to allow flow and retention of water in the area.
- Add Condition of Approval (COA) Shall remove all Stinkwort plants (*Dittrichia graveolens*) from entire property and the road ROW by manual pulling or herbicide by Sept 1 of each year until final building approval.

AB moved, PB seconded, all approved.

As the meeting was running over time, no other sections of the agenda were addressed at this time. Denise Gluhan of LAHFD requested that we consider signing up for the LAHFD alerts and schedule a HIZ visit for our homes.

AB adjourned the meeting at 11:36 am.